

Message Text

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UNCLAS KUWAIT 1557

BEIRUT FOR LEFEAVER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BMEP, BGEN: KU

SUBJ: MAJOR TRADE/INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY: KUWAIT NEW TOWN
PROJECT

REF: A) KUWAIT 1169 B) STATE 68746 C) STATE 68241 D) KUWAIT 1408

1. RECENT USIS-SPONSORED VISITOR, THEODORE BRITTON, DEPUTY ASST. SECRETARY, HUD DISCUSSED SUBJECT PROJECT VIS-A-VIS US CAPABILITIES WITH LEADING OFFICIALS NATIONAL REAL ESTATE CO. AND ITS PARENT ORGANIZATION THE KUWAIT CREDIT AND SAVINGS BANK. BECAUSE NREC HOPES TO EXECUTE NUMBER OF LOW-COST HOUSING PROJECTS WHICH CREDIT AND SAVINGS BANK PLANS AND FINANCES ON BEHALF OF GOK AS WELL AS NEW TOWN AND OTHER PROJECTS LISTED IN PREVIOUS REFTELS, BRITTON DISCUSSED WITH THEM "OPERATION BREAKTHROUGH" WHICH WAS MAJOR USG EFFORT TO IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE IN US LOW-COST HOUSING TECHNIQUES USING LOCAL MATERIALS AND UNSKILLED LABOR WHEN AND WHEREVER POSSIBLE. KUWAITI INTEREST IN THIS PROGRAM WAS TREMENDOUS AND BRITTON AND EMBOFFS AGREED TO TRY TO PROVIDE WHATEVER MATERIAL AND DATA AVAILABLE ON COMPANIES WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM ASAP.

2. MEANWHILE, NREC OFFICIALS HAVE COMPLAINED TO EMBOFF OF THE LACK OF ADEQUATE RESPONSE FROM US COMPANIES, WHOM THEY SEEM TO FAVOR, FOR PARTICIPATION WITH NREC IN EXECUTING HOUSING AND OTHER
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REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN KUWAIT AND LOWER GULF. THEY

WANT A PARTNER WITH WIDE-RANGING CAPABILITIES, BUT PREFER FIRMS WITH CONSTRUCTION CAPABILITIES ABOVE THOSE PROVIDING ONLY ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES. THUS FAR, NREC HAS RECEIVED TELEX OR BRIEF LETTERS FROM THE FOLLOWING FIRMS NONE OF WHICH HAS SENT BROCHURES OR TAKEN ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS: CHARLES LUCKMAN ASSOCIATION; WEIDLINGER ASSOCIATION; SKIDMORE OWINGS, AND MERRILL; DOBER, PADDOCK, UPTON AND ASSOCIATES INC.; NESLO MANUFACTURING CORP. (DOYLESTOWN PA.); AND PACIFIC BRIDGE (OAKLAND, CA.)

3. ACTION REQUESTED: BRITTON HAS SUGGESTED CONTACTING DR. THOMAS CALLAWAY, DIRECTOR TECHNOLOGY AND DOCUMENTATION, HUD AND REQUEST HIM TO FURNISH ANY AND ALL INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON FIRMS THAT PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION BREAKTHROUGH AND THE RESULTS THEY ACHIEVED. HE SUGGESTED INFO PREVIOUSLY SUPPLIED INDIAN DEPT. OF SCIENCES APPROPRIATE. MOREOVER, WOULD BE USEFUL IF COMMERCE COULD DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT TO INDUSTRIAL HOUSING FIRMS WHICH PARTICIPATED IN BREAKTHROUGH AND REQUEST THEM TO CONTACT NREC. SOME COMPANIES IN WHICH NREC HAS ALREADY EXPRESSED STRONG INTEREST INCLUDE ZACHRY CONSTRUCTION CO., HOUSTON; MATERIAL SYSTEMS CORP., ESCONDIDO, CA.; AND INTERNATIONAL LIFTING SLAB, TOPEKA, KAN. EMBASSY WILL AIRPOUCH TO FISS COPY OF LETTER NREC RECENTLY PROVIDED US OUTLINING THEIR PROPOSAL. THIS CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED US COMPANIES.

4. COMMENT: TALKS BRITTON HAD WITH NREC OFFICIALS CONFIRMED THEIR DETERMINATION AND ENTHUSIASM TO MOVE AHEAD WITH NEW TOWN AND OTHER PROJECTS JUST AS SOON AS SUITABLE FOREIGN PARTNER CAN BE LOCATED. US FIRMS ARE OBVIOUSLY FAVORED BY NREC, BUT THEY ARE UNDER PRESSURE TO GET MOVING AND WILL LIKELY TURN TO OTHERS SUCH AS FRENCH WHO RECENTLY VISITED THEM HERE, IF SERIOUS INTEREST NOT EVIDENCED BY US FIRMS.
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